United Nations A/63/818

General Assembly

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Sixty-third session
Agenda item 101
Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund

Arrangements for the revision of the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund

Report of the Secretary-General*

Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 8.1 of the annex to my report on the arrangements for establishing the Peacebuilding Fund (A/60/984), in which I indicated that the terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund should be reviewed no later than two years after their adoption and following consultations with the Advisory Group and the outcome of an independent evaluation.

Context

2. In General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), the Assembly and the Council tasked me with establishing a standing peacebuilding fund for post-conflict peacebuilding, with the objective of ensuring the immediate release of resources needed to launch peacebuilding activities critical to the peacebuilding process. The terms of reference for the Fund (A/60/984, annex) describe its scope, its focus on interventions with direct and immediate relevance to peacebuilding and addressing critical gaps, and its role in serving as a catalyst for the sustained support and engagement of other key stakeholders. In the two years since its establishment, the Peacebuilding Fund has made progress in these areas. Yet, judging on the basis of operational experience and growing recognition of the potential of the Fund for peacebuilding, I am convinced that the effectiveness and the catalytic impact of the Fund can be further enhanced. To this end, the process leading to the Fund's revised terms of reference which are contained in the annex to the present report, as well as the continuing improvement of its management structure, is critical and timely.

* Late submission of the present document was due to the need for several rounds of consultations with a wide range of stakeholders within the United Nations Secretariat and with Member States in order to forge broad agreement on the final version.

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3. The Peacebuilding Fund, managed by the Peacebuilding Support Office under my authority, has supported peacebuilding activities that directly contribute to the stabilization of countries emerging from conflict and has helped to generate early peace dividends as well as strengthen a country's capacities to promote peaceful resolution of conflicts and respond to threats that might lead to the recurrence of conflict. From its inception to 28 February 2009, the Fund received pledges from 45 donors amounting to $319.3 million, a figure that exceeds by 28 per cent the $250 million funding target established at its creation. Total deposits and available programming funds amounting to $292.4 million have enabled the provision of peacebuilding support to approximately 93 peacebuilding support programmes and projects in 11 post-conflict countries declared eligible to receive Fund support.

4. In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 8.1 of the annex to the report mentioned in paragraph 1 above and the views of Member States expressed during the consideration by the General Assembly on 9 and 13 October 2008 of the progress of the Peacebuilding Fund, the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office initiated a revision of the terms of reference for the Fund which incorporated and benefited from a series of discrete processes. Recommendations of the Peacebuilding Fund Advisory Group in the context of its biannual meetings provided valuable input and observations on the workings of the Fund in its first two years. A second element was an independent evaluation undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight Services on 30 December 2008 which concluded that the Fund had the potential to fill a unique peacebuilding niche in the post-conflict arena and had achieved notable early results on the ground. However, several structural and management challenges were also identified, which are being addressed by the Peacebuilding Support Office, as outlined in its management response of 23 January 2009.

5. Extensive informal consultations and briefings held with Member States, donors, the Peacebuilding Commission, principal representatives to the United Nations of recipient countries, and the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the United Nations interdepartmental Peacebuilding Contact Group and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Multi-donor Trust Fund, between December 2008 and March 2009 provided an opportunity both to take into consideration the views and inputs of a broad range of stakeholders and to review lessons learned from the Fund's workings to date. I am grateful to Member States and all stakeholders for their support and engagement in this process.

6. The revision of the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund was guided by two broad objectives. The first was to enhance the Fund's capacity to serve as a flexible, responsive and focused resource for peacebuilding support, including through rationalizing and simplifying the Fund's structure and architecture as set out in the terms of reference. The second objective was to enhance and maximize the synergy between the Peacebuilding Commission and the Fund through provisions for enhanced consultation and dialogue. Detailed Fund management and administration issues will be incorporated in updated fund policies and guidelines which will accompany the revised terms of reference. The Peacebuilding Support Office will review Fund guidance documents in cooperation with the UNDP Multi-donor Trust Fund Office as Fund administrative agent, as well as with the Advisory Group, donors, recipient United Nations organizations and country-level stakeholders.

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7. The UNDP Multi-donor Trust Fund Office will continue to serve as the Peacebuilding Fund's administrative agent, with primary responsibility for maintaining the Fund's accounts. The Peacebuilding Fund will be managed in accordance with UNDP regulations, rules, directives and procedures. To enhance accountability and clarify roles and responsibilities, arrangements detailing the relationship between the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the UNDP Multi-donor Trust Fund Office will be reviewed so as to reflect the provisions of the revised terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund.

8. As set out in the annexed revised terms of reference, the Peacebuilding Support Office will conduct regular briefings on the performance of the Peacebuilding Fund with Member States, the Peacebuilding Commission and donors, while a proposed annual meeting will provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to review Fund performance, results and emerging lessons. This event will also provide an opportunity to regularly replenish the Fund.

Conclusion

9. The revision of the terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund will contribute towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Fund in stabilizing countries emerging from conflict, in addressing the critical gaps that are commonly in evidence immediately following the signing of peace agreements, and in strengthening national capacities to pursue peacebuilding programmes aimed at consolidating the peace process. Fund resources, combined with the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission, will help to ensure that post-conflict countries benefit from the sustained attention and support of the international community.

10. In the light of the above, Member States are invited to give their support to the revised terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund and are encouraged to continue to provide regular voluntary contributions so as to ensure that the Fund focuses effectively on the critical peacebuilding activities of countries emerging from conflict.

Annex

Terms of reference for the Peacebuilding Fund

1. General considerations and principles

1.1. The General Assembly and the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to establish a multi-year standing Peacebuilding Fund (hereinafter referred to as the Fund) for post-conflict peacebuilding.[a] The Peacebuilding Fund, together with the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Support Office, is part of a broader United Nations peacebuilding architecture which works with international- and country-level partners in support of post-conflict peacebuilding. The Fund provides for a more sustained engagement in support of countries emerging from conflict and will support peacebuilding activities that directly contribute to post-conflict stabilization and strengthen the capacity of Governments, national/local institutions and transitional or other relevant authorities.

1.2. The Peacebuilding Fund is a global fund designed to support several country situations simultaneously and therefore combines the scope of a global fund with the country-specific focus of a multi-donor trust fund. The Fund's basic architecture encompasses a two-tier decision-making process, involving a central allocation of funding to countries eligible for Fund support and, at the country level, a joint review by the Government and the senior United Nations representative of the Secretary-General in the country (hereinafter referred to as the senior United Nations representative) concerning the disbursement of funds against agreed-upon programme and project activities.

1.3. In fulfilling its mandate to provide immediate and direct support to post-conflict countries, the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund shall be guided by the following principles:

- Transparency
- Flexibility
- Operational speed
- Accountability
- Catalytic effect
- Effectiveness
- Needs-based allocations
- National ownership

1.4. The Secretary-General has entrusted the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office with responsibility for managing the Peacebuilding Fund and coordinating all aspects of the work and programmes to be financed from the Fund, while recognizing the specific roles, responsibilities and accountability of other stakeholders.

[a] See General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005).

2. Scope of the Peacebuilding Fund

2.1. The Peacebuilding Fund will support interventions of direct and immediate relevance to the peacebuilding process and contribute towards addressing critical gaps in that process, in particular in areas for which no other funding mechanism is available. Use of Fund resources is intended to have a catalytic effect in helping to create other, more sustained support mechanisms, such as longer-term engagements by development organizations and bilateral donors, and the mobilization of national stakeholders in support of peacebuilding. Support extended through the Peacebuilding Fund must have a direct and positive impact on the sustainability of the peacebuilding process. The Fund supports countries included in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, as well as countries recovering from conflict or considered to be at risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict that are not included in the agenda of the Commission.

The activities with a specific scope to be funded by the Peacebuilding Fund will include:

(a) Activities designed to respond to imminent threats to the peace process, support for the implementation of peace agreements and political dialogue, in particular in relation to strengthening of national institutions and processes set up under those agreements;

(b) Activities undertaken to build and/or strengthen national capacities to promote coexistence and peaceful resolution of conflict and to carry out peacebuilding activities;

(c) Activities undertaken in support of efforts to revitalize the economy and generate immediate peace dividends for the population at large;

(d) Establishment or re-establishment of essential administrative services and related human and technical capacities which may include, in exceptional circumstances and over a limited period of time, the payment of civil service salaries and other recurrent costs.

2.2. Consultative processes with key stakeholders at both the country level and at United Nations Headquarters will be required to ensure that there is no duplication or overlap between the Peacebuilding Fund and other funding mechanisms. This ongoing coordination effort will also need to be extended to include the transition from peacebuilding support to sustainable development.

2.3. The Peacebuilding Fund will support efforts to address immediate needs in countries emerging from conflict at a time when sufficient resources are not available from other funding mechanisms that could extend support to peacebuilding activities. The Peacebuilding Fund would thus focus on delivering the greatest value added during the very early and critical stages of a peacebuilding process, before donor conferences are organized and before such funding mechanisms as country-specific multi-donor trust funds have been set up.

2.4. There may, however, be specific instances in which the Peacebuilding Fund could meaningfully extend support to countries at a more advanced stage of their peacebuilding process, in particular:

(a) Countries for which no multi-donor trust fund has been established;

(b) Countries with an operational multi-donor trust fund but in which critical peacebuilding interventions remain underfunded or in which the need for such interventions arises unexpectedly.

3. Allocation and disbursement process

3.1. In principle, any country before the Peacebuilding Commission should be considered a possible recipient of Peacebuilding Fund support. The Commission would advise the Secretary-General that the country under consideration should be considered eligible for funding, which will then formally trigger the allocation and disbursement process. The Commission is expected to make this determination early on in its deliberations to ensure that support through the Fund can be provided in a timely manner. The Commission will be provided with regular updates and have the opportunity to provide, at the initial stage of priority plan formulation, strategic advice on overall funding priorities on the basis of the Commission's strategic engagement in the country concerned.

3.2. The Secretary-General may determine that a particular country in exceptional circumstances and on the verge of lapsing or relapsing into conflict may be considered eligible for Peacebuilding Fund support, even if the country is not yet under consideration by the Peacebuilding Commission. The Secretary-General will inform the Commission of such a decision.

3.3. The Peacebuilding Fund shall provide immediate response, recovery needs and peacebuilding assistance to countries included in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission and those not included in the agenda of the Commission. In all cases, the Secretary-General will inform the Commission regarding the activation of funding facilities and will provide justification for the selection of countries and/or the allocations made.

(a) *Immediate Response Facility*. Taking maximum advantage of the ability of the Peacebuilding Fund to act rapidly and flexibly, this Facility will provide emergency funding for immediate peacebuilding and recovery needs. Countries included in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission as well as those not included in the agenda of the Commission are eligible. A request should be made by the national authorities and the senior United Nations representative in the country. The Secretary-General can immediately decide to allocate funds based on a case-by-case assessment. Where emergency and/or recovery requests exceed amounts identified in the operational policies and guidelines of the Fund, the Secretary-General will subsequently initiate further detailed assessment of such requests.

(i) For countries included in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission that are applying for support from the Immediate Response Facility, the Commission may offer strategic guidance on immediate and/or critical peacebuilding and recovery needs in the country concerned.

(ii) For countries not included in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, once a request has been submitted, the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office will undertake a rapid and thorough review of the funding request with an accompanying risk assessment.

(b) *Peacebuilding and Recovery Facility*. In all cases, allocations and disbursements will be made based on a priority plan jointly developed by national

authorities and the United Nations presence in the country concerned. For countries included in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, the priority plan will be informed by the priority-setting exercise and/or the integrated peacebuilding strategy agreed between the Commission and the national authorities of the country concerned.

3.4. The priority plan is developed by national authorities and the United Nations in a country based on a joint analysis of critical gaps and peacebuilding needs. It contains an indicative number of critical interventions required to strengthen and sustain the peacebuilding process. In countries where a post-conflict needs assessment is ongoing or has been completed and/or a national peace consolidation or recovery framework is in place, attention will be focused on ensuring that these elements inform the development of the priority plan, or feed into the priority-setting exercise in countries included in the agenda of the Commission. The priority plan will propose interventions and provide corresponding indicative budget estimates. It may also indicate, where available, tentative funding requirements beyond the immediate scope of the Peacebuilding Fund. For countries included in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Support Office will present such requirements to the Commission with a view to securing early consideration for additional financial support from non-Fund funding sources. The priority plan is submitted to the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office for approval.

3.5. Under the authority of the Secretary-General, the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office will conduct an expeditious review of the priority plan through a consultative process involving senior officials from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat and the United Nations Development Operations Coordination Office,[b] UNDP,[c] and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in an effort to avoid any duplication with respect to ongoing or planned interventions. Other departments, funds, agencies and programmes, as well as international financial institutions, can also be consulted when appropriate.

(a) For priority plan-based programme applications, the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office will determine the overall country funding envelope based on a review of the priorities set, with due regard for funding needs, the available balance in the Peacebuilding Fund and projected requirements for new countries likely to be considered by the Fund.

(b) For emergency peacebuilding and recovery funding requests submitted by a country through the ranking senior United Nations representative, the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office will ensure that consideration includes appropriate review procedures and risk assessments, which will be conducted in a manner that does not compromise speed or efficacy of response.

3.6. The review and approval of project activities will be conducted at the country level utilizing existing coordination and consultation mechanisms where feasible, and co-managed by the respective senior United Nations representative and the concerned Government authorities, and with representatives of other key

[b] Supporting the chair of the United Nations Development Group.

[c] As chair of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee working group on early recovery.

stakeholders (hereinafter referred to as the National Steering Committee). In formally approving project submissions, the ranking senior United Nations representative and the Government will be required to ensure that any activities to be funded under the Peacebuilding Fund country allocation will:

(a) Support the priorities and needs reflected in the priority plan and, for countries included in the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, the priorities established by the Commission;

(b) Adhere to the established principles of the Fund referred to in paragraph 1.3 above;

(c) Address any gap that cannot be, or has not been, funded through any other mechanism;

(d) Not duplicate other ongoing interventions;

(e) Be undertaken by competent recipient organizations with the requisite expertise and capacity.

3.7. In addition to central Government authorities, the organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including its funds, programmes and specialized agencies, and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations (all of which will be hereinafter referred to as recipient organizations), can receive Peacebuilding Fund support through project agreements as implementing partners.

4. Management of the Peacebuilding Fund

4.1. Under the authority of the Secretary-General, the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office will provide overall direction and guidance on programme management of the Peacebuilding Fund and monitor its operations. The UNDP Multi-donor Trust Fund Office will serve as the administrative agent responsible for the administration of the Peacebuilding Fund, the receipt of donor contributions, the disbursement of funds and compilation of consolidated financial and narrative reports in accordance with the terms of reference, under the overall authority of the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office. The UNDP Multi-donor Trust Fund Office will administer the Peacebuilding Fund in accordance with UNDP regulations, rules, directives and procedures. A formal agreement to determine fiduciary responsibility, programming modalities at the country level and related reporting requirements will be negotiated directly between the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the UNDP Multi-donor Trust Fund Office.

4.2. The Peacebuilding Support Office, in consultation with the administrative agent and recipient agencies, shall establish operating policies, guidelines and procedures for use in the Peacebuilding Fund process.

4.3. The Peacebuilding Fund will be utilized for the purpose of meeting the direct and indirect costs of projects managed and/or implemented by the recipient organizations. In addition, the Fund resources may be used by the Peacebuilding Support Office to support Fund operations at global and country levels. The overall management fees for both programme implementation and Fund management shall not exceed 11 per cent of funds received.

4.4. Recipients will assume full programmatic and financial accountability for the funds disbursed to them by the administrative agent. For United Nations recipients, such funds shall be administered in accordance with their own regulations, rules, directives and procedures. All other recipients shall follow the reporting and audit principles prescribed by the United Nations in respect of financial resources obtained from the Peacebuilding Fund.

5. Governance arrangements

5.1. The General Assembly will guide the operations of the Peacebuilding Fund. On the basis of an annual analytical report submitted by the Secretary-General, pursuant to the provisions of section 6 below and reflecting the lessons learned, the Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission may offer overall policy guidance on the use of the Fund.

5.2. The Peacebuilding Commission will support the development of integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery and provide strategic advice related to countries under its review.

5.3. The Secretary-General will appoint an independent Advisory Group to provide advice and oversight on the speed and appropriateness of Peacebuilding Fund allocations and to examine performance and financial reports. On the basis of nominations from Member States, the Secretary-General will appoint to the Advisory Group up to 10 eminent personalities, selected on the basis of their peacebuilding experience, from all regions, including countries contributing to the Fund. Members will be appointed for a two-year period and the Advisory Group will meet at least twice a year, receiving support from the Peacebuilding Support Office.

6. Reporting, accountability, transparency and audit

6.1. The administrative agent shall submit to the Secretary-General, through the Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office, consolidated financial and narrative progress reports, based on reports submitted by recipient United Nations organizations which will include a reflection on lessons learned. These consolidated reports, which will include country-specific sections, shall be submitted by the administrative agent to the Peacebuilding Support Office at regular intervals, as specified in the formal agreement referred to in paragraph 4.1 above.

6.2. The Secretary-General shall submit an annual report to the General Assembly on the basis of the consolidated reports compiled by the administrative agent which will be complemented by information on performance updates and evaluation submitted by respective National Steering Committees. The annual report shall detail all disbursements made by the Peacebuilding Fund and examine in detail the outcomes achieved, including gender analysis, applying a results-based framework. Regular updates on the use of Fund resources and general Fund information shall be published on a dedicated website.

6.3. The Peacebuilding Fund shall be independently evaluated every three years to assess effectiveness in fulfilling its objectives and overall impact in support of peacebuilding. The Peacebuilding Support Office will make active use of

evaluations and lessons-learned exercises so as to rapidly build up a body of knowledge and best practices relating to the utilization of the Fund.

6.4. The Peacebuilding Support Office shall also provide regular briefings to Member States and donors on the performance of the Peacebuilding Fund based on the progress reports and evaluations referred to in paragraphs 6.1 and 6.3 above. An annual Peacebuilding Fund meeting will be convened to provide all stakeholders with the opportunity to review Fund progress and emerging lessons.

6.5. The Peacebuilding Fund will be subject solely to the external and internal audit procedures of the United Nations.

7. Contributions to the Peacebuilding Fund

7.1. The current funding target of the Peacebuilding Fund of $250 million should be increased in response to evolving needs and activities of the Fund. Voluntary contributions to the Fund, to be received at the global level, will be accepted from States Members of the United Nations, intergovernmental organizations and other sources, including the private sector.

7.2. The Peacebuilding Fund is a multi-year standing fund and requires a continuous income to maintain its operability. The annual meeting to review progress referred to in paragraph 6.4 above can provide an occasion for replenishment of the Fund. The Peacebuilding Support Office and the UNDP Multi-donor Trust Fund Office will provide donors with detailed reports on the use of the Fund, in terms of performance progress and expenditure, so as to provide thereby substantive support to any replenishment request.

8. Review and amendment

8.1. The Head of the Peacebuilding Support Office, in consultation with the Advisory Group, may initiate a formal process to amend the terms of reference.

United Nations A/63/819–S/2009/204

General Assembly
Security Council

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15 April 2009
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General Assembly
Sixty-third session
Agenda item 52 (a)
Groups of countries in special situations: Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Letter dated 10 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the statement by the States members of the Rio Group and of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) entitled "Towards a new paradigm of cooperation", issued on 8 April 2009 in preparation for the Conference on the Economic and Social Development of Haiti to be held on 14 April 2009 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would circulate this letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 52 (a), and as a document of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Claude **Heller**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 10 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English and Spanish]

Donors Conference on the Economic and Social Development of Haiti

"Towards a new paradigm of cooperation"
Washington, D.C., 14 April 2009

Statement by the States members of the Rio Group and of the Caribbean Community

The Permanent Representatives of the States members of the Rio Group and of the Caribbean Community to the United Nations,

1. Reaffirmed their full support for the "Conference on the Economic and Social Development of Haiti — Towards a new paradigm of cooperation", which will take place in Washington, D.C., on 14 April 2009, taking into account that the socioeconomic development of Haiti and thus the stability of the country require the sustained cooperation of the international community. Therefore they urged donors and other cooperation partners to increase their support to the country through bilateral, regional or multilateral mechanisms established to such effect.

2. Highlighted the preparatory work carried out by the Haitian Government, donors and other cooperation partners at the technical meeting that took place in Ottawa on 2 and 3 March 2009.

3. Congratulated the Haitian Government on the design of an action plan within the framework of the National Strategy Plan for Growth and Poverty Reduction and the Post-Disaster Needs Assessment. These actions are a clear priority of the Haitian Government regarding the work of the Conference.

4. Expressed their wish that the decisions to be adopted during the Conference would contribute to a better alignment of the priorities of the Haitian Government and the offers of donors and other cooperation partners in a common partnership framework based on the principles of shared responsibility and efficiency.

5. Welcomed the inclusion within the agenda of issues related to the strengthening of the Haitian budget as an appropriate instrument for channelling international financial support. This will enable the Haitian Government to achieve a better coordination of that support and a better visibility of the work of the Government by the population.

6. Stressed that the contributions by non-governmental organizations should be channelled in accordance with national needs and priorities established by the Government of Haiti.

7. Reaffirmed their support for the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) in support of the Haitian Government and people.

8. Expressed their firm decision to continue supporting the Government of Haiti in its efforts for the improvement of security, protection and promotion of human

rights and the strengthening of institutions, fundamental pillars to consolidate democratic governance in the country and to lay the foundations of a sustainable, just and equitable economic development.

9. Took note of the progress made in achieving a coordinated programme of Latin American cooperation for strengthening the Haitian National Police, in particular, of the meetings held in Santiago and Port au Prince and the establishment of a working group, which is currently devoted to finalizing a plan of action aimed at coordinating police cooperation, including new cooperation initiatives, and making full use of available resources for police training. In this regard, the Permanent Representatives stressed the need to include this issue on the agenda of future donor conferences.

New York, 8 April 2009

United Nations A/63/820–S/2009/208

General Assembly
Security Council

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16 April 2009
English
Original: Russian

General Assembly
Sixty-third session
Agenda items 12 and 68

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Prevention of armed conflict

Report of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter dated 1 April 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a decision of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation in connection with its statement "On the tenth anniversary of the military operation launched by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the aforementioned decision and statement issued and circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 12 and 68, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Igor **Shcherbak**
First Deputy Permanent Representative of the
Russian Federation to the United Nations

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Annex to the letter dated 1 April 2009 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Statement of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation "On the tenth anniversary of the military operation launched by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia"

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation hereby decides:

1. To adopt the statement of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation "On the tenth anniversary of the military operation launched by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia".

2. To transmit this decision and the aforementioned statement to the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. D. A. Medvedev, the Government of the Russian Federation, the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, the United Nations, the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the European Parliament, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of the States Members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Parliamentary Assembly of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia.

3. To transmit this decision and the aforementioned statement to the Parliamentary Gazette for official publication.

4. This decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

(*Signed*) B. V. **Gryzlov**
Chairman of the State Duma of the Federal Assembly
of the Russian Federation

Moscow, 20 March 2009
No. 1857-5 GD

Enclosure

On the tenth anniversary of the military operation launched by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia

In connection with the tenth anniversary of the military operation launched by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation declares that its assessment of this aggressive act against a sovereign State remains unchanged.

In its statement of 27 March 1999 "In connection with the aggression of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia", the State Duma strongly condemned the war against an independent State and the missile and bomb attacks on civilians, concluding that "the military actions against Yugoslavia by NATO, undertaken without the authorization of the United Nations Security Council, undermine the entire system of international security based on the authority of the United Nations and discredit the role of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)".

Time has shown the correctness of that assessment, including the assertion that any actions taken to bypass the United Nations, in violation of international law, will never help to resolve complex conflicts or to stabilize the international situation. The military operation, justified in the West on humanitarian grounds, caused great harm to the people and economy of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It inevitably gave rise to the new humanitarian challenges now facing hundreds of thousands of Serbian refugees and the small Serbian population still in Kosovo, and also had grave political implications for the situation in the Balkans and for security, peace and stability in Europe.

The deputies of the State Duma are deeply convinced that the NATO military action against Yugoslavia in 1999 led to the unlawful unilateral declaration of Kosovo as an independent State in contravention of United Nations decisions, notably Security Council resolution 1244 (1999). The premature recognition of a new entity by the States that were the main organizers of the military operation in March 1999, their allies and the States dependent on them was not objectively determined by the readiness of the province to become a new subject of international law or by the genuine achievements of the interim administration in Kosovo in terms of nation-building or ensuring the rights and freedoms of the population in the province. Instead, this recognition was motivated by the desire of those States to justify and legitimize, if only partially, an illegal process that began with the NATO actions taken a decade ago.

The deputies of the State Duma believe that every effort must be made to address the negative consequences arising from the events of a decade ago that, inter alia, led to clear distortions in the work of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia), which has been mainly concerned with prosecuting participants in the conflict on the Serbian side. To all intents and purposes, the perpetrators of crimes against the Serbs and their

holy sites have gone unpunished. March 17 marked the fifth anniversary of the tragic events of 2004, when hundreds of people fell victim to anti-Serb pogroms in Kosovo and dozens of churches and monasteries were destroyed and desecrated.

The Kosovo precedent has helped to create many dangerous trends in international affairs by strengthening separatism and reducing the role of negotiations in the settlement of disputes, leading some States to seek to resolve their internal and external conflicts through military force. The deputies of the State Duma are convinced that the military action taken against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1999 was largely responsible for the decision of Georgia to carry out an armed attack on South Ossetia in August 2008: in both cases NATO support provided unduly to one party to the conflicts helped that party to withdraw from the negotiation process taking place within the legal framework established by the international community and encouraged reliance on the use of military force in those conflicts. In the case of both the military operation of 1999 and the aggression of Georgia in August 2008, a settlement agreeable to all parties to the conflicts has not been achieved and the foundations of international law, peace and stability were grossly violated by those who launched the military actions.

The State Duma calls on the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. D. A. Medvedev, and the Government of the Russian Federation to make every effort to complete the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and to resume negotiations on the status of Kosovo in strict compliance with Security Council resolution 1244 (1999).

The deputies of the State Duma support the policy adopted by the leadership of the Republic of Serbia in the search for an exclusively legal resolution to the conflict. This constructive approach has already received international support in the United Nations General Assembly, which, on 8 October 2008, adopted resolution A/RES/63/3 submitted by the Republic of Serbia, entitled "Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on whether the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo is in accordance with international law".

The State Duma reaffirms its long-standing position: the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija shall remain an integral part of the Republic of Serbia until a settlement satisfactory to both sides is reached and an appropriate legal decision has been adopted.

Moscow
20 March 2009

United Nations A/63/821

General Assembly

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16 April 2009

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Sixty-third session
Agenda item 49
Sustainable development

Letter dated 15 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you information on the reforms concerning the revitalization of villages in Turkmenistan (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could kindly circulate the attached information as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 49.

(*Signed*) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Permanent Representative

09-30496 (E) 270409 280409

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Annex to the letter dated 15 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Reforms for the revitalization of villages in Turkmenistan

One of the main aims of Government policy is to strengthen Turkmenistan's economy and enhance the well-being of the Turkmen people. In 2009 more than 19 trillion manat has been allocated to the development of various sectors of the national economy, 42.8 per cent more than in 2008.

The main area of employment in Turkmenistan is agriculture. The successful implementation of the planned economic and socio-political reforms and the achievement of significant improvements in people's well-being depend on the depth and effectiveness of the reforms in rural areas. This feature of the economy is also determined by the existence of favourable climate conditions for agricultural production, the supply of land and demographic characteristics: more than half of the population of Turkmenistan (57.9 per cent) lives in rural areas. The agricultural sector of the economy has undergone fundamental reorganization. Since mid-1995, all of the country's collective and State farms have been abolished. Reform has focused on transferring land to private use and long-term lease and expanding the size of privately held plots. Single-person daikhan (peasant) farms have become widespread and peasant associations of several farms have been formed.

Recently, employment has increased significantly in a number of sectors that are key to progress in the country's economic development. The number of people employed in industry has increased significantly (by a factor of 1.8) and the employment pattern has changed substantially: more people are working in manufacturing, which indicates that the level of employment in the commodity sector has fallen. Since 1993 Turkmenistan has been providing its citizens with free gas, electricity, water, salt and medical services and the opportunity to receive free secondary and higher education.

The Government has also taken steps to stimulate private agricultural production. Farmers are offered preferential loans at an annual interest rate of 1 per cent and preferential tax treatment, and half of their expenditure on technical services is covered by the State. Taxes on livestock and poultry and on privately held plots of land and the structures built on them have been waived.

In order to strengthen targeted support for the population, fundamental reform of the social security system has begun. A new Social Security Code of Turkmenistan has been adopted and has significantly changed the approach to the calculation of retirement pensions and State benefits. The Code places special emphasis on measures for the protection of motherhood and childhood, including in rural areas, and new types of universal benefit that are paid irrespective of income have been introduced. In view of the exceptional urgency and importance of reforming agriculture in order to raise it to an advanced level, a new strategy of fundamental reform in this important sector was drawn up in March 2007. The economic, legal and organizational basis for reform of the country's agro-industrial complex has been established and laws on daikhan associations, daikhan farms and

archins (local government heads) have been adopted with the aim of improving industrial relations in rural areas and enhancing the system of State payments to farmers.

The steps taken by the Government have helped to revitalize agriculture and increase production in the sector. In 2007, 588 peasant associations, 1,700 daikhan farms and 714,600 family-owned personal plots were engaged in agricultural production. Some 88.4 per cent of all irrigated arable land in Turkmenistan has been leased. The number of leaseholders engaged in crop production has reached 443,900, while in animal husbandry the number is 23,300. Gross agricultural output in 2007 was 31.9 trillion manat, which represented a 19 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

The President's large-scale National Programme to upgrade social and living conditions in villages, towns, cities, etraps (districts) and etrap centres for the period up to 2020 is aimed at establishing modern socio-economic infrastructure in rural areas.

This is a phased long-term Programme covering three periods: 2008-2010, 2011-2015 and 2016-2020. Some 4 billion dollars will be allocated from the State budget for the first phase alone.

The Programme covers all areas of social development: education, health care, nursery schools, culture and sport. It provides for the establishment of modern socio-economic infrastructure in the regions in the following main areas: the construction of hospitals, houses and health centres, schools and nursery schools with multimedia equipment, libraries, cultural centres, sports schools and facilities, water supply and sewage systems, wells, highways, gas pipelines, power lines and installations, the development of a communications system and the construction of housing. In the period to 2020, 5,222,400 square kilometres of comfortable housing is to be built.

In all velayats (regions), modern medical diagnostic centres provided with the latest equipment have been built and brought into operation. In 2007 the President of Turkmenistan signed a decision on the construction of mother and child health centres in all velayats. Such centres have been brought into operation in two of the five velayats.

A large-scale home-building programme is under way in Turkmenistan, including in rural settlements. Comfortable, well-designed homes are being transferred to the private ownership of citizens on preferential terms: a 30-year loan period, with part of the cost paid by an organization.

Under the National Programme, new etraps (districts) have been formed and, in existing ones, facilities have been improved. Companies in key sectors of the economy have built more than 40 socio-economic facilities in these etraps: cultural centres, an automatic telephone exchange with telegraph services, Internet access and mobile communications equipment, a market and shopping centre, houses, schools, health centres equipped with the latest medical equipment, and hospitals. In the new etraps, modern social and engineering infrastructure is being established.

In 2008, approximately 1 million tons of grain and more than 1 million tons of cotton were harvested, and arrangements were made to pay daikhans for their produce. A great deal of work was carried out with regard to the management of

land and water resources, the introduction of advanced agricultural technology and the modernization of the production infrastructure in the food sector. Through targeted support to State and private enterprises in the agroprocessing and food industry, an abundance of varied, high-quality and affordable domestically produced foodstuffs is now available to consumers.

In comparison with the same period last year, output of practically all types of agricultural produce in Turkmenistan has increased, which in turn has had a positive impact on the financial situation in the sector.

In order to increase the volume of agricultural output, particular attention is being paid to improving land fertility and crop yield, including through expert crop rotation, the use of elite seeds and biotechnology, and regional climate-specific specialization. Extensive work is under way to ensure the proper use of chemicals in the agricultural industry, improve the condition of reclaimed land, manage water resources, introduce drip irrigation, and develop livestock selection and breeding.

Today, the Government of Turkmenistan is demanding a more responsible and strictly scientific approach to issues such as the sector's transition to market principles, the development of rural entrepreneurship and the establishment of small and medium-sized individual businesses that will engage in the production, stockpiling, processing, storage, transport and sale of agricultural produce. The provision of high-quality agricultural produce requires the modernization of existing businesses in the food industry and the construction of new grain elevators and mill complexes. There is a need to address issues relating to the opening of specialized shops selling agricultural equipment and spare parts in the velayats.

Science plays a key role in the agricultural sector and should have a significant impact on the development of rural areas. Information centres, specialized science centres, breeding stations and biological laboratories will be set up in every velayat for the study and dissemination of global experience and the conduct of scientific research and practical workshops. For the training of qualified agricultural experts, an agricultural institute will be opened in Dashoguz velayat, along with vocational technical schools and all kinds of education centres in the etraps, in addition to the existing Agricultural University in Ashgabat.

The creation of decent living and working conditions is a prerequisite for the success of all the planned reforms, particularly in agriculture. There is no doubt that the whole package of measures being taken by the Government of Turkmenistan to stimulate agricultural production will help to boost business activity and eventually strengthen the country's food independence.

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General Assembly

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Sixty-third session
Agenda item 64
Promotion and protection of human rights

Letter dated 15 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to convey to you the information on the gender policy of Turkmenistan (see annex).

I would appreciate it if you could kindly circulate the present letter and its annex as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 64.

(*Signed*) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Permanent Representative

09-30502 (E) 290409 300409

Please recycle

Annex to the letter dated 15 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

The gender policy of Turkmenistan

Turkmenistan is at a qualitatively new stage in its political, socio-economic and cultural development.

The Government of Turkmenistan is committed to fulfilling the international obligations it has assumed pursuant to United Nations human rights conventions.

The status of women in Turkmenistan is determined by the overall strategy and priority areas of State policy, which aims to realize the principle of equal rights and freedoms and establish equal opportunities for men and women in accordance with the Constitution of Turkmenistan, the norms of international law and the recommendations of the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995).

The gender policy carried out in the country since the early days of independence aims to develop institutional and legislative support measures guaranteeing equal participation by women in all spheres of public life, the opportunity to realize the constitutional principle of gender equality and the creation of identical opportunities for women and men.

Condemning discrimination against women in all its forms, Turkmenistan is consistently and unswervingly pursuing a policy of no tolerance for any gender-based distinction, exception or limitation. The national Constitution guarantees equal human and civil rights and freedoms regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, origin, material or employment status, place of residence, language, attitude towards religion, political conviction, or party affiliation or lack thereof (see article 19 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan). Turkmenistan's approach to guaranteeing genuine equal rights for women and enhancing their role in public and political life has a solid national and international legal foundation.

Unswervingly meeting its international obligations and acknowledging the norms of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Turkmenistan has adhered to the main international human rights instruments, including the declarations and conventions on women's rights: the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Political Rights of Women, the International Labour Organization Convention concerning Equal Remuneration for Men and Women Workers for Work of Equal Value, the International Labour Organization Convention concerning Discrimination in respect of Employment and Occupation, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and others. The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women is now at the ratification stage.

Implementation of the basic principles of Turkmenistan's human rights policy ensures the multifaceted development and progress of women and establishes State guarantees of women's enjoyment of human rights and freedoms in political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres on a basis of equality with men. The Constitution of Turkmenistan and all national legislation, including the Labour Code, the Marriage and Family Code, the Social Security Code and the Laws on State Guarantees of Women's Equal Rights, Citizens' Health and Safety, Education, Safety in the Workplace, Employment and Leave guarantee gender equality.

Women represent 50.2 per cent of the population of Turkmenistan. In the Mejlis (Parliament) of Turkmenistan, 17 per cent of the deputies are women, including the Speaker and chairpersons of two of the five parliamentary committees. The vice-premier is a woman, and women serve as ministers, diplomats, deputy heads of regional, municipal and district governments, editors-in-chief of media outlets, directors of higher education establishments and scientific institutions and heads of central and local electoral commissions. They are also represented in the representative and executive authorities of the State at all levels: 13.5 per cent of the elected members of local government bodies and 15.5 per cent of the members of the representative bodies of the halk maslahaty (council of elders) and velayats (regions) are women.

The Act on State Guarantees of Women's Equal Rights was adopted on 14 December 2007 in order to implement international legal norms on the equality of women and with the aim of giving effect to the main principles of national human rights policy eliminating all forms of discrimination against women and guaranteeing women's full development and progress. Pursuant to the Constitution and international law, the Act establishes State guarantees for women's enjoyment of human rights and freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural and other spheres on a basis of equality with men.

Pursuant to article 27 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan, "Upon reaching the minimum age for marriage, women and men have the right to enter into marriage by mutual consent and to create a family. The spouses are equal in the family relationship." That equality is one of the primary principles of the family law of Turkmenistan. Thus, in accordance with the Marriage and Family Code, all citizens have equal rights in family relationships. No limits on rights, be they direct or indirect, or establishment of direct or indirect advantages upon entry into marriage and family relations on the basis of origin, social or material situation, race or ethnic affiliation, gender, education, language, attitude towards religion, type or nature of occupation, place of residence or other circumstances (article 4 of the Code) are permitted.

Citizens of Turkmenistan have the right to health care, including use at no cost of a network of State health-care establishments. A national programme entitled "Health" is being successfully implemented, and high-quality mother-and-child health-care centres with the most sophisticated equipment available have been set up in all velayats (regions). The adoption of the national rural development programme, for which the Government of Turkmenistan has allocated US$ 4 billion, aims to develop all forms of social infrastructure in rural areas, and includes the construction of new kindergartens, schools, hospitals, stadiums and cultural institutions.

Paid medical care and non-traditional medical treatment are permitted if supplied on the basis of, and in accordance with, the law. The national programme also aims to strengthen women's health and protect reproductive health. To improve the health of women of childbearing age and their children through the introduction of modern examination and care methods for pregnant women, women in childbirth, women who have recently given birth and newborns, the Ministry of Health and the medical sector in Turkmenistan have developed a national safe maternity programme, taking into account World Health Organization recommendations, for the period 2007-2011. Health centres, family doctors and nurses educate women about various contraceptive methods. Reproductive health centres in every velayat (region) of Turkmenistan are working actively in that area.

National health promotion campaigns, including a programme to prevent HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases, for the period 2005-2010, and a national safe maternity programme, for the period 2007-2011, are functioning successfully.

The right to education for every citizen is enshrined in the Constitution of Turkmenistan. General secondary education is compulsory, and everyone is entitled to receive it in State schools at no cost (article 38 of the Constitution of Turkmenistan).

The State provides access to vocational training for all, according to ability.

On the basis of and in accordance with the laws of Turkmenistan, State and non-governmental organizations as well as individuals have the right to engage in educational activity for pay.

The State sets educational standards, which are obligatory for all educational institutions.

Following innovations in education, relevant changes were made to the Education Act.

On 24 May 1996, Turkmenistan ratified the Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees concerning Higher Education in the States belonging to the Europe Region (21 December 1979) and the Regional Convention on the Recognition of Studies, Diplomas and Degrees in Higher Education in Asia and the Pacific (16 December 1983).

Presidential decrees on improving the educational system in Turkmenistan (15 February 2007), on improving the functioning of education and instruction establishments (4 March 2007) and on increasing student grants and salaries for educators (30 March 2007), which resulted in higher salaries for employees in the education sector, in larger student grants, in reduced teaching workloads and in the opening of boarding schools for children of remote etraps (districts) of the velayats (regions) have promoted the fullest enjoyment of the constitutional right to education by the country's citizens, including women.

An extensive network of educational institutions has been set up to provide the necessary conditions for all citizens to receive primary, secondary and specialized education regardless of gender, ethnicity, material or other status. The network includes State-supported pre-schools, schools, vocational establishments, boarding schools for disabled children and higher education institutions. At present, the country has 1,711 secondary schools, attended by over 1 million children. There are

17 secondary-level vocational schools and 17 higher education institutions. Higher education is free of charge.

Secondary schools and higher education institutions are equipped with up-to-date multimedia and computer technology and use interactive teaching methods, permitting the young people of Turkmenistan to receive a world-class education.

The Act amending and supplementing the Social Security Code of Turkmenistan (6 March 2009) is one response to the issue of social support for maternity and childhood. The Act increases the size of the lump sum paid upon the birth of a child, extends from one and a half to three years the period over which childcare support is paid and disability payments have been increased. Starting on 1 July 2009, these types of allowance will be increased by an average of 27-28 per cent.

The Constitution and national laws guarantee to all citizens of Turkmenistan, without regard to gender, legal and court protection against the application of any form of discrimination to their rights. An effective system for considering appeals and complaints is in place, as is court protection guaranteed by law in the case of violation of rights on the basis of gender.

In accordance with the Constitution of Turkmenistan, court protection of honour and dignity and of the personal and political human and civil rights and freedoms provided for by the Constitution and the laws is guaranteed to citizens. Citizens are entitled to challenge in court the actions of State bodies, community organizations and officials committed in violation of the law, or involving overstepping of authority and infringement of the rights and freedoms of citizens.

Citizens have the right, without distinction based on gender, to make legal demands for compensation for material and moral injury caused by illegal actions by State bodies or other organizations, their employees or private individuals.

Court protection of personal, property and non-property rights, honour, dignity and business reputation is guaranteed to all citizens of the country without distinction as to gender by the Civil Code of Turkmenistan (articles 15 and 16). Criminal law is based on the principle of the equality of all citizens before the law.

In the context of the programmes which have been developed, a project of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Turkmenistan Women's Union, Gender Mainstreaming in Policy Making in Turkmenistan, is being successfully carried out. The project has three main goals:

- to strengthen specific elements of the legal basis of gender equality;
- to strengthen accountability and implementation measures in connection with ratified conventions and decisions of United Nations conferences on gender issues;
- to strengthen the national gender analysis and gender mainstreaming mechanism.

In order to implement the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action, a National Action Plan for 2005-2010 has been developed. It defines general strategy and priority areas for the gender policy of Turkmenistan. The national plan is designed to translate into action the principle of equal rights and freedoms and to create new opportunities for women and men in accordance with the Constitution of

Turkmenistan, international norms and the recommendations of the Fourth International Conference on Women, taking into account the actual socio-economic situation in Turkmenistan.

The National Action Plan provides for the establishment and expansion of a network of women's civic organizations and a broad range of support for their activity and gender mainstreaming. In order to implement it, a project to strengthen the role of women in the socio-economic development of Turkmenistan was carried out (1998-2001).

Results have been achieved in raising the gender awareness of employees of State bodies, local authorities and government, community organizations and the public as a whole by means of training programmes, workshops, conferences, dissemination of gender statistics, publication of newsletters and materials on women's rights and gender issues, including reports such as *The Women of Turkmenistan and Gender Statistics, Women's Rights in Turkmenistan* and *A Report on the Status of Women in Turkmenistan*, and pamphlets such as *Gender Stereotypes, Gender and Gender Equality, Gender and Sex* and *The Triple Role of Women*.

In all velayats (regions), workshops have been held with the representatives of local government and the public to address gender issues and to explain the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. A workshop entitled "Women and the Mass Media, a Gender Approach", has been held for members of the media, and one entitled "Research and Teaching on Gender Issues in Turkmenistan" has been conducted with educators from schools, higher education institution's and vocational schools.

With support from the United Nations Development Programme, the Women's Union of Turkmenistan has set up over 30 women's information and resource centres in the velayats (regions). The resource centres play an important role in raising women's political, legal, economic, environmental and reproductive awareness and in promoting greater activity on the part of women in all areas of public life.

Paper and electronic materials have been developed to support women's community organizations. The materials contain systematically arranged extracts from the provisions of current legislation on the protection of women's rights and freedoms which regulate labour, the family and non-discrimination against women and from the relevant United Nations conventions.

New programmes are needed to increase women's role in the process of market reform and their active participation in all spheres of activity, to provide legal and social guarantees to successfully combine motherhood with an increase in women's activity in industry and entrepreneurship and to increase their role in the process of radical transformation. In that connection, surveys have been conducted.

The Women's Union of Turkmenistan and UNDP have implemented a project entitled "Gender Mainstreaming in Policy Making in Turkmenistan". In connection with the project, a survey was conducted in 2006 and an analytical report prepared.

One priority area of the National Action Plan is women's participation in the economic sphere. Employment provides women with financial independence, strengthening their social and political position. Women's share in small entrepreneurship and medium-sized business is steadily increasing. At present,

women are broadly represented in the self-employed and informal sectors. As surveys have revealed that women are leaning towards developing businesses, programmes targeting women and involving training courses and special credit schemes are being conceived and carried out to develop entrepreneurial skills.

With support from UNDP, the Turkmenistan Women's Union has developed a programme to create self-employment opportunities for rural women. The main goal of UNDP is to develop the potential of the women in the etraps (districts) and create the conditions for women's self-employment by means of applied education courses and events which will help women to obtain knowledge to promote their economic independence.

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Sixty-third session
Agenda items 51 (e), 53, 54 and 55

Globalization and interdependence: integration of the economies in transition into the world economy

Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Operational activities for development

Social development

Letter dated 13 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the speech to the people of Kazakhstan, "Through crisis to renovation and prosperity", made by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 6 March 2009 (see annex).

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly under agenda items 51 (e), 53, 54 and 55.

(*Signed*) Byrganym **Aitimova**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Kazakhstan
to the United Nations

09-30574 (E) 270409 300409

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Annex to the letter dated 13 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Kazakhstan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Russian]

Speech entitled "Through crisis to renovation and prosperity" made to the people of Kazakhstan by the President in 2009

For almost two decades we have been building, day by day, a new country.

A country that is open and prosperous.

A country where the well-being of Kazakhs is improving year by year.

A country that is politically stable and provides security for its citizens.

A country that no one will ever see as a source of external threat.

The development strategy for Kazakhstan which was adopted for the next few decades, and the experience of translating it into this country's real achievements, have given us confidence in our own strength and a feeling of certainty that we have chosen the right path.

It is for this reason that, from the very outset of the crisis that hit the global financial markets more than two years ago, we developed and have been consistently implementing a comprehensive set of anti-crisis measures.

We are closely watching domestic and external developments and are taking prompt and decisive measures. That is why the global food crisis did not become a national disaster for us.

Today, however, the economic crisis that has already affected the entire global economy is continuing to test our strength.

This crisis came to us from outside. Its origins were not in this country — they are rooted in the imbalances of the global economy.

The crisis could not have been avoided, nor could everything have been foreseen.

The leading economies of the world have already spent more than US$ 10 trillion, or almost 15 per cent of the gross domestic product of the entire world, to overcome it. But so far there has been no improvement in the situation.

The crisis has successively engulfed the American continent, Europe, and Asia.

In all probability, it is going to be a protracted crisis. According to analysts, the global economic downturn has not yet reached bottom.

I expressed my view on the global developments in my article "Keys to the crisis". Reactions to it may vary, but we Kazakhs have contributed our ideas to the general quest for a way out of this crisis. This is not a simple crisis, and a wide variety of solutions is needed.

I am convinced that this global crisis will change the international financial system and, maybe, the political ways in which States are managed. Many people

are recognizing the need for the economy to be managed "in the manual mode" and regulation is becoming crucial to finding a way out of the crisis.

An in-depth and radical approach will therefore help the international community find ways that will safeguard us against future vagaries of the global market economy.

That is why the radical measures which I proposed are going to be discussed by the global community.

My proposal is a contribution to the search for solutions to the global problems.

But the current reality is that the contraction of business activity in the world has brought down the demand for oil and metals, Kazakhstan's principal exports.

Within one year, the price of oil and metals dropped by almost three quarters and one half, respectively.

Our main trading partners and closest neighbours, the Russian Federation and Ukraine, devalued their currencies by 40-45 per cent. We, too, had to let the tenge depreciate in the interests of our producers. Otherwise, Kazakhstan's products would no longer have been competitive. We would have continued to burn through the country's gold and foreign exchange reserves.

Unfortunately, the constant trials and the pressure of the crisis are unrelenting. This is something which you should be aware of.

But you should also rest assured that we are more than just prepared for these trials.

We will overcome them and we will emerge from this crisis as an even stronger and more prosperous State.

We will preserve our positions in the global community.

The establishment of the National Fund was part of our purposeful policy to accumulate savings.

You will remember how much controversy there was about whether or not the Fund should be established or whether it would be better to distribute funds little by little to everyone. What would we be doing now about paying pensions and wages with budget revenue down by 20 per cent?

We did the right thing by establishing the Fund in the good times. This is what should be done by States that care about the future.

In this way, we created a margin of safety, enabling our economy to withstand any potential shocks of this type.

In order to create a viable and resilient economy, we consistently implemented difficult structural reforms, built up our export potential and began to diversify.

That is precisely why we have a solid reserve today and we are in a position to conduct a sound and effective anti-crisis policy.

Most States have responded to the current global crisis by adopting stimulus packages.

Kazakhstan was one of the first States in the world to respond promptly to the increasing turbulence in the global economy and start implementing proactive measures.

In order to maintain the stability of the financial system, we provided banks with additional liquidity. That was done to support the economic activities of small, medium and large enterprises.

The insurance coverage for individual deposits was increased from KZT 700,000 to 5 million. The State helped mitigate the banking sector's risks associated with external borrowing and capital adequacy.

A total of KZT 545 billion was allocated to support housing construction and address the problems of unit holders in real estate investment associations.

To maintain business activity in the country, we provided unprecedented financial support to small and medium enterprises in an amount of KZT 275 billion. Further resolute steps were taken to reduce administrative barriers.

A new tax code providing for significantly lower rates of basic taxes was enacted.

The corporate income tax has already been reduced to 20 per cent this year, or by one third compared to last year, and the rate will be 15 per cent in 2011. The rate of value added tax (VAT) has been lowered to 12 per cent. The regressive scale of social tax rates has been replaced with a flat rate of 11 per cent. Tax benefits are available to enterprises that are making investments.

All of this has provided a most important incentive for the development of the non-commodity sector of the economy, and small and medium business.

The law on State procurement offers preferential treatment to domestic producers, which is also designed to support small and medium business.

An amount of KZT 280 billion has been allocated for the development of agribusiness, and KZT 120 billion has been made available for infrastructure projects.

In total, over KZT 2,700 billion has been injected into the national economy to counter the crisis.

You will agree that this is a powerful stimulus for overcoming the effects of the global crisis.

We are acting resolutely and expeditiously because we know what needs to be done, and when, to reduce the impact of the global crisis on our economy and society.

This response was helped by the joint and timely efforts of the country's Government and Parliament.

I want you, my fellow countrymen, to understand that all of us must rally together to withstand the pressures of the current period.

The Government must guarantee that all of its commitments to increase social benefits and the wages of public sector workers are honoured in full.

As had already been planned, the wages of those employed in the public sector and stipends will be increased by 25 per cent in 2010 and by a further 30 per cent in 2011.

The average amount of pensions will be increased by 25 per cent in 2010 and by 30 per cent in 2011.

By 2011, the base part of the pension will be raised to 50 per cent of the minimum subsistence level.

As you know, the State has provided support for students who were left without the means to pay for their tuition. All in all, the State is additionally providing 11,000 grants and 40,000 loans for students.

We are faced with the enormous tasks of overcoming the consequences of the crisis and laying the groundwork for future economic growth.

Everything that has been done so far was intended to deal with the current problems brought about by the ongoing crisis.

I propose that we should not stop, that we should move forward and implement a new plan to further modernize the economy and carry out an employment strategy to support the post-crisis development of this country.

It was during the most difficult years that we began and completed the construction of a new national capital — Astana — at a time when nobody believed that we would be able to do that. We did it, and the whole world can see it. Let us emulate that positive experience.

Yes, new resources are needed. For this purpose, I believe it would be appropriate if the revenue from the commodities sector that has traditionally been saved in the National Fund could be used to implement the new plan in 2009-2010. The total amount would be about KZT 600 billion and would be in addition to the transfers from the National Fund that have already been approved.

This is an ad hoc measure, but a necessary one. At the same time, we are preserving the level of the country's gross reserves that we have now that is, US$ 47 billion. This will give us a guarantee of stability should the current crisis continue.

Another source of resources is rigorous cost-cutting across all spending items of the budget and the strictest financial discipline. With that in mind, I am instructing the Government to optimize the expenditure of the national budget and control the use of budgetary resources on the basis of literally weekly monitoring. This request is also addressed to our parliamentarians.

The extravagance that became a habit during the period of rapid growth must give way to reasonable consumption and frugality. To be blunt, during the years when we came into money, expectations went up, staffing levels were inflated, the number of business trips increased, and all kinds of large-scale cultural events were organized. We will all need to think about this.

Those who breach financial discipline must be held accountable with all severity required at a time of crisis. All non-priority expenditure — administrative, investment and so forth — must be reduced to zero. This applies to local budgets as well.

The money thus saved will give us an opportunity, first of all, to implement an employment strategy for Kazakhs. Not only will this strategy help us cope with the shocks of the crisis, but it will also guarantee that the economy develops efficiently after the crisis is over. It should create new opportunities for every family in Kazakhstan.

The adequate availability of jobs must become the main gauge to measure the ability of members of the Government and each *akim* to ensure the sustainable development of Kazakhstan's economy.

Each *akim*, each minister must know how many jobs have been lost each week, and how many new jobs are being created at the local level. This is the very foundation of sustainable development.

To support employment and personnel retraining at the regional level, I direct the Government to earmark at least KZT 40 billion.

Resources should also be allocated from local budgets to co-finance the employment strategy.

We will create new jobs for those who are out of work. We will be able to provide jobs for at least 350,000 Kazakhs, not counting the public works that are currently under way.

We have opportunities for developing the labour market; there is no need to invent them. This is what the additionally allocated money will be used for.

First, rehabilitation and modernization of utilities, namely water, heat, power and sewage facilities and networks.

I instruct the Government, together with the *akims*, to determine what expenditure will be necessary for these purposes, and to ensure not only that this work receives financing, but also that the most rigorous control is exercised over the use of each tenge allocated from the budget.

This is invisible work, but we will have to do it anyway. It is the foundation for future development. This will give us an opportunity to create a vast number of new jobs in cities and at the local level. We will raise the purchasing power of our population. If we are to work in a smart way, those who become redundant need to be retrained in new skills.

The housing and utilities sector should have been put in order a long time ago. Let us deal with this now.

Second, construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of local roads and renovation of the social infrastructure, in particular schools and hospitals.

This is already the task of social enterprise corporations, which have a duty to ensure the maximum employment of the population. The financial side is the responsibility of the Government and the *akims*.

We must reach agreement now and tell the public directly that we will complete the schools and hospitals that are already under construction. We will postpone new projects because of the prevailing situation, but we will use the money to repair existing schools, hospitals and clinics. Again, we will create new jobs.

The construction of major highways and railways that was planned earlier will also have to be put on hold. But the money will be used to improve the roads around regional centres and cities, and inter-regional roads. By doing this, we will improve our logistics.

Third, locally important projects in each specific locality. This could be landscaping and planting of greenery, repairing roads, community centres or other facilities at the discretion of the local authorities. Targeted transfers should be made available for these purposes.

Resources must be provided to district *maslikhats* as the local self-government bodies. They should make their own decisions as to where this money can best be used to address local problems and employment issues.

I am making the *akims* personally responsible for the effectiveness of this work in general.

We should make maximum use of the potential of local producers to implement all of the above-mentioned projects. If the required production capacity is lacking today, it needs to be created, and this opens up new business opportunities.

After all, we are approaching the twentieth anniversary of our independence. Work should be undertaken all across Kazakhstan to prepare for the occasion. These are unforgettable years for our generation and for our people. There has been nothing like this in the history of the Kazakh nation and all of Kazakhstan.

We therefore need to start this work now. I believe that we should give a small amount of money, probably KZT 50-100 million, to the *akim* of each *aul* so that, under the supervision of the district *maslikhat*, they can address the current problems of members of their communities who are in distress and issue microcredits.

In that way, we will not only be addressing employment issues, but also creating incentives for the emergence of new production capacity in our country.

Fourth, creation of more social service jobs and organization of job training programmes for young people.

The current Employment Act allows us to use budget resources for these purposes. In 2008, more than 13,000 individuals benefited from these programmes.

Our task today is to expand the coverage of the existing programmes.

I am issuing instructions for an additional KZT 8.6 billion to be allocated for these purposes. We will then be able to provide work for about 96,000 people.

At the same time, we must increase, from four to six months, the maximum period during which unemployment benefits are paid from the State Social Insurance Fund.

Our employment strategy during the global crisis envisages full-scale retraining and professional development programmes.

I am instructing the Government, together with the *akims*, to organize retraining of specialists at existing training institutions.

Our population needs to learn — in the world at large, people learn all their lives. In this regard, there are opportunities and there is a need for retraining and learning new skills that are in demand today.

We are now requiring all large construction companies to allocate funds to train people in other occupations. That is how it should be everywhere. If the Government and the *akims* organize this work properly, people will embrace training opportunities and learn new skills.

Systematic retraining and professional development efforts must aim to accomplish the following goals:

Everyone who wants to take up a new occupation should have an opportunity to receive training.

Labour resources should be made available to meet the future requirements of the economy, particularly in agriculture.

Foreign workers should be gradually replaced with domestic labour. We are planning to reduce their number by one half and replace them with our people.

Furthermore, despite the global crisis and the difficulties we are experiencing during this period, we cannot afford to focus solely on dealing with these difficulties. Our future depends on further modernization of the economy and development of the basic infrastructure.

We will continue to finance and implement promising investment projects that are already under way.

This refers primarily to the modernization of oil refineries.

We have three oil refineries but we continue to buy lubes and we are not self-sufficient in jet fuel. This needs to be addressed now.

We must gradually move towards full self-sufficiency for these oil products.

We will continue building a petrochemical facility in Atyrau. We will complete the construction of the Moinak hydroelectric power plant this year and will continue expanding and upgrading the GRES-1 power plant in Ekibastuz. Only four of the eight units are operational there. This electric power is readily available and cost-effective. We will continue work at the GRES-2 power plant in Ekibastuz to build a third generating unit, and the construction of the Balkhash cogeneration plant will begin this year.

We plan to build the Beineu-Bozoi-Akbulak main gas pipeline and to modernize the Western Europe-Western China road transit corridor. Preparatory work will begin this year. There will be 5,000 people working there, and in 2010-2012 there will be up to 50,000 workers.

This is going to be an artery that will turn Kazakhstan into a transit corridor between Europe and Asia.

We have started organizing production of electric locomotives, passenger and freight cars, road binders and chemicals.

I should like to make special mention of the agribusiness sector, whose development will enable us to address simultaneously two tasks that are extremely important for this country: achieving food security and diversifying exports.

We have therefore decided to continue financing investment projects for the development of export-oriented production facilities, including projects to establish and develop dairy farms, poultry factories and fattening stations, and to organize fruit and vegetable farming with the use of drip irrigation, install assembly lines for farm machinery and develop meat-processing and fine wool processing facilities and the infrastructure for the export and deep processing of Kazakhstan's grain.

Consideration should be given to other important construction projects, including the continued construction of the Koksaray water reservoir and other major irrigation facilities.

Our target was to make 60,000 hectares of irrigated land available for use in the Kyzylkum area. Work should be started now at the sites for which feasibility studies and access roads are available. Farm produce processing is a highly important sector. Today we import 80 per cent of canned vegetables and fruit, 50 per cent of meat products and 53 per cent of powdered milk. If all of this is to be produced locally, city dwellers must go to work in the farming industry.

By our estimates, export orientation will help create more than 500,000 new jobs and will add about 8 per cent to the GDP growth rate over the next five years.

Accordingly, in line with the strategic choice that we have made, we are continuing consistently to work in those sectors of the economy where we can achieve real competitiveness and carve out niches for ourselves in external markets.

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The current difficulties are not the first trial that has befallen us.

We overcame the very deep crisis of the transition period in the early 1990s.

At that time, the economy contracted by up to 60 per cent and annual inflation was in four digits.

We survived the second global crisis that originated in the Asian financial markets in the late 1990s. The price of oil fell to nine dollars per barrel. We could not pay pensions and wages. But we surmounted those difficulties.

Some time will pass and we will be able to say that we have overcome the current crisis as well.

We have every opportunity to emerge from the existing situation, with some losses, but prepared for a new round of growth.

Crises will be recurrent and our objective is to learn how to manage them. So far, we have been able to do so.

Today, we are being compelled to regroup our forces and resources, and we are doing this under the influence of external circumstances. However, that does not in any way mean that we have changed our course. This course is charted in the National Development Strategy up to 2030. Circumstances have necessitated adjustments. But I emphasize that we are staying the course.

Prosperity, security and greater well-being for all Kazakhs remain the triple priority for our State.

We have an anti-crisis plan, and sufficient resources have been allocated from the State reserves. The Government as a whole, and the Prime Minister, the heads of

government agencies and the *akims*, are personally responsible for implementing the planned anti-crisis measures.

The current problems and the way we handle them are a test of the maturity and stability of our society and our State. I believe that we will pass the test. We are going to enter a new stage in our development and to multiply our achievements. I am convinced that we will rise to the challenge.

We need the cohesion of our nation to achieve the objectives set.

I therefore call upon all Kazakhs to get started on implementing the above-mentioned measures, to demonstrate hard work and perseverance, to be frugal, and to support and care for your kith and kin and all those who need help.

I appeal to the deputies of Parliament, the *maslikhats* and the *Nur Otan* party. The voters who voted for our party have placed enormous confidence in us. Now, during the difficult times of crisis, we must live up to this confidence and spearhead the broad-based anti-crisis movement in society.

Together with the Government and local authorities, we need to address people's specific problems and exercise special control over the implementation of the anti-crisis measures and the spending of the budget resources allocated for these purposes.

I appeal to the People's Assembly of Kazakhstan, to all political forces. Now is the time when it is not words, but deeds, that will be used to judge who really cares about the people, and who does not.

Let us rally to overcome the most severe crisis in the history of this planet!

Let us not embitter the people, let us support them in word and deed. This is precisely what the State is doing now. Preserving peace and concord in this country remains an important task.

I appeal to all civil servants. The accountability of each government official to the people whom we are all serving is increasing manifold now. There is a need for more frequent on-site visits and meetings with work teams and the public. It is necessary to explain the measures being taken by the State and to rally people to deal with the problems.

I appeal to law-enforcement officers. We depend on you for peace and tranquillity in the streets of our towns and villages. Resolute and tough measures must be taken to fight crime, corruption, fraud and violations of the law. During this difficult time, every effort must be made to ensure the safety of our citizens and of society as a whole.

I appeal to the media to take an active civic stance. You are called the "fourth estate" for a reason.

The media must now act as a "counselor" to the people and advise them on the best way to withstand and overcome difficulties and survive during these difficult times. Citizens should be educated using the positive experience of other people as an example. The same role is assigned to our academic and artistic intelligentsia.

There should be more publications that promote such sentiments as confidence, personal activism, tolerance, patriotism and love for the Motherland.

Members of the *Nur Otan* party should reach out more often to households to explain what retraining opportunities are available, how loans and microcredits can be obtained and what needs to be done during the difficult years. It is important to go from door to door, to visit every family and become helpers and advisers to the ordinary people. It needs to be explained that there is nothing to be afraid of, that this is a large country and that there are plenty of work opportunities.

The success of the new stage in the country's development will largely depend on the actions we take and the decisions we make.

We have the necessary resources and experience to withstand the pressure of the global crisis. We have a clear anti-crisis programme. All the objectives that have been set are achievable.

I am confident that we will overcome all the difficulties and will make our Kazakhstan a strong and prosperous State enjoying the world's respect.